
Rural Health Clinics (RHCs)



An RHC is a healthcare facility located in a rural area federally designated as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) or a Medically Underserved Area (MUA) and is neither a rehabilitation agency nor a facility primarily for the care and treatment of mental diseases. An RHC must provide primary health care, including laboratory services to its patients. The RHC's laboratory services are subject to the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA).

RHC Federal and State Requirements

In Idaho, RHCs are governed by federal certification regulations. Idaho has no state licensure rules for RHCs. Applicable federal certification requirements are found in the State Operations Manual (SOM), [Chapter 2](#), Section 2240, [Appendix G](#), and [Appendix Q](#). Below is a brief overview of the regulations. Please refer to the SOM and Appendices for additional information.



Appendix G – Guidance to Surveyors: Rural Health Clinics



[Appendix G](#) includes the federal statutory designation, the regulatory language, and interpretive guidance. The regulations are divided into Conditions for Coverage (CFCs or Conditions), standard, and element level requirements. CFCs represent the overall services and supports an RHC must provide. Under each CFC are the standard and element level regulations associated with that CFC. The purpose of the interpretive guidance is to clarify the information that is relevant to specific requirements, and to assist in consistent decision-making about facility compliance.

Appendix Q – Guidelines for Determining Immediate Jeopardy

[Appendix Q](#) provides guidance specific to situations of Immediate Jeopardy. Jeopardy is defined as a situation in which the entity's noncompliance "...*has caused, or is likely to cause, serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident receiving care in a facility*".

The three components of Immediate Jeopardy are *Harm, Immediacy*, and *Culpability*. Harm may be actual or potential; immediacy means the harm is likely to occur in the very near future if immediate action is not taken; and culpability asks if the entity knew or should have known about the situation.

Additional Information

For additional information regarding the RHC program, please visit the [CMS Rural Health Center](#).